
Maryland Act of Toleration

— Gabby and Natalie —

What it was:

- >A document that promised religious freedom to Catholics in Maryland, but sentenced anyone who denied the existence of Jesus to death.
- >House of Delegates passed it in fear that Protestants may restrict Catholic liberties.
- >First law in British North America that allowed freedom of religion, and was later echoed in the First Amendment.

What it said:

>Anyone who says anything against God or denies the existence of Jesus will be killed, and all his stuff will be given to Lord Baltimore.

>Anyone who criticizes the Virgin Mary, the holy Apostles, or the Evangelists, has to pay 5 pounds of Sterling. If they can't pay, they will be publicly whipped and imprisoned for an indefinite amount of time.

>Anyone who calls someone a mean name because of their religion has to pay 10 shillings sterling. If the person can't pay, they'll be publicly whipped and put in jail until they say they're sorry.

Additional Information:

- >Immigrants were drawn to Maryland's economic opportunity, therefore many were individuals and not families resulting in a mixture of religions.
- >Workers and artisans were mostly Protestant, and country gentlemen were Catholic. Inevitably there were more poor people (Protestant) in the society.
- >Catholics were in the minority; most people were Protestant or Anglican
- >Repealed by William Claiborne (Anglican) in 1654, reinstated, and then repealed again in 1692.